# TALK Checklist for Dual Language Learners

It is important for teachers to know DLLs' developmental language level in **each** of the languages they know. This checklist is intended to help you gather information about how DLLs communicate and respond in each language they speak**, with special focus on their vocabulary use**.

**Tier 1** words are basic words children often hear others use in spoken language. Examples are baby, happy, walk, milk. Some DLLs may not know many Tier 1 words in English and you may need to intentionally teach these.

**Tier 2** words are more sophisticated words that typically appear in written text across different content areas. They are often the type of words we select as our **target or focus words** related to our read alouds. Examples are obvious, determined, relieved, combine, variety.

**Cognates** are words in different languages that share the same root. Many Tier 1 and Tier 2 words in English have a cognate in Spanish. For example, family/familia, fortunate/afortunado, education/educación.

If you are not able to evaluate the child's language level in their first language, you can seek help from family members, bilingual staff, or volunteers.

| Child's Name: | Date of Observation: |
|---|---|
| **ENGLISH** | **FIRST LANGUAGE (indicate language)** _____ |
| Date: | Date: |
| ☐ Uses multiple sentences that include Tier 2 words | ☐ Uses multiple sentences that include Tier 2 words |
| Note the T2 words: | Note the T2 words: |
| ☐ Uses some Tier 2 words in a complete sentence | ☐ Uses some Tier 2 words in a complete sentence |
| ☐ Uses complete sentences with Tier 1 words | ☐ Uses complete sentence with Tier 1 words |
| ☐ Uses 1-3 word phrases with Tier 1 words | ☐ Uses 1-3 word phrases with Tier 1 words |
| ☐ Responds with pointing and/or gestures only | ☐ Responds with pointing and/or gestures only |
| ☐ Responds in first language only | |
| ☐ Does not respond | ☐ Does not respond |
| Use of languages in response: | Use of languages in response: |
| ☐ Mostly uses English | ☐ Mostly uses first language |
| ☐ Code-switching (combines English and first language in sentence) | ☐ Code-switching (combines English and first language in sentence) |
| ☐ Mostly uses first language | ☐ Uses some English |
| **ADDITIONAL NOTES AND IDEAS FOR SUPPORT** | |
| | |
| H – Honor the child's first language and acknowledge all attempts to communicate<br>A – ask questions and give ample time for response<br>B – Build on the child's responses<br>L – Link first language to English<br>A – Add visuals, gestures, and props as you talk | |